

**Amendments to the Claims**

1. (Currently Amended) A soil compaction device ~~with~~comprising: a guide handle provided with at least one light detector in ~~the~~an area gripped by ~~the~~a hand, said light detector emitting a signal corresponding to ~~the~~a brightness ~~(brightness signal)~~, wherein the light detector is coupled to an evaluation circuit that can evaluate the brightness signal in such a way that when a prescribed brightness threshold is either exceeded or is not met, a control signal is sent to a control unit of the soil compaction device, and wherein the brightness threshold can be variably adjusted by the evaluation circuit according to ~~the~~ surrounding conditions ~~by means of~~ via a surrounding light detector that is coupled to the evaluation circuit and is provided outside the grip area of the hand to determine the surrounding conditions.

2. (Previously Presented) A soil compaction device according to claim 1, wherein the light detector at the guide handle does not contain a light-emitting element.

3. (Currently Amended) A soil compaction device according to claim 1, wherein the light detector at the guide handle is a photodiode, a phototransistor or a light-sensitive resistor ~~(LDR light dependent resistor)~~.

4. (Currently Amended) A soil compaction device according to claim 1, wherein a number of light detectors are provided at the guide handle at a minimum of two places in ~~the~~ grip areas of both hands.

5. (New) A soil compaction device comprising:  
a guide handle;  
at least one light detector located on said guide handle in an area configured to be gripped by a hand of an operator, said light detector emitting a signal corresponding to a brightness;  
a control unit; and  
an evaluation circuit that is coupled to said light detector, wherein said evaluation circuit is configured to evaluate the brightness signal in such a way that when the brightness signal either exceeds or falls below a prescribed brightness threshold, a control signal is sent to the control unit of the soil compaction device; and  
a surrounding light detector that is coupled to the evaluation circuit, that is provided outside the grip area of the handle, i.e., and that is configured to determine surrounding conditions, wherein the evaluation circuit can variably adjust the brightness threshold according to the surrounding conditions detected by the surrounding light detector.

6. (New) A soil compaction device according to claim 5, wherein the light detector at the guide handle does not contain a light-emitting element.

7. (New) A soil compaction device according to claim 5, wherein the light detector is selected from the group consisting of a photodiode, a phototransistor and a light-sensitive resistor.

8. (New) A soil compaction device according to claim 5, wherein a plurality of light detectors are provided at a minimum of two places on the guide handle that are configured to be in areas gripped by both hands of an operator.

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**Amendments to the Drawings**

An additional sheet of drawings has been added and labeled Fig. 1. The one sheet of drawings originally filed with the application has been labeled Fig. 2.